Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2011/08/10: CIA-RDP80-00809A000600320701-7

CLASSIFICATION

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50X1-HUM

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION FROM
FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

CD NO.

REPORT

COUNTRY

USSR

DATE OF INFORMATION

1949 - 1950

SUBJECT

Economic - Mineral resources, salt mining

HOW

Daily, weekly newspapers; monthly periodical

WHERE

PUBLISHED

PUBLISHED

USSR

NO. OF PAGES 2

DATE DIST. 5 Jul 1950

DATE

PUBLISHED

3 Nov 1949 - 25 Apr 1950

LANGUAGE

Russian

SUPPLEMENT TO

REPORT NO.

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SOURCE

Newspapers and periodical as indicated.

USSR HAS VALUABLE SALT DEPOSITS; SALT MINING IS MECHANIZED

/Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources. 7

One of the oldest and largest salt deposits in the USSR, at Solikamsk on the Kama River, was discovered several hundred years ago. This deposit consists mostly of common salt (sodium chloride), but also contains fairly large quantities of potassium salt. The potassium content in Solikamsk is greater than in all other salt deposits of the world taken together.(1) The potassium salt in this location consists of sylvinite and carnallite and is used for manufacturing potassium chloride, and excellent fertilizer. The salt deposits at Solikamsk reach a depth of 400 meters.(2)

Salt deposits have also been discovered south of Solikamsk, as far as the Caspian plain between the Ural and Emba rivers. The chain of salt deposits extending to the south from Solikamsk ends in the region of Lake Inder, which is rich in deposits of potassium-boron-magnesium. This type of salt deposit is unequaled elsewhere in the world. The composition of salt deposits in the southeast part of European USSR is in many ways superior to that of the Solikamsk deposit, as the latter contains no potassium sulfate. The Inder deposit is rich in this type of salt and it also contains compounds of boron.(1)

Another unique salt deposit in the USSR is the Kara-Bogaz-Gol Bay in the Caspian Sea. The main type of salt found here is Glauber salt, also called mirabilite, which turns into crystals in the winter and dissolves in the water at the beginning of the warm season. The mirabilite crystals, which are thrown out on the shore by the waves, contain 10 molecules of water to one molecule of sulfate. In the summer the water evaporates from the crystals and they are transformed into anhydrous soldium sulfate, losing their crystal form in the process. To obtain sodium sulfate industrially from common salt and sulfuric acid complicated and expensive machinery is necessary. In Kara-Bogaz-Gol, sulfate is produced by a natural process.

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In addition to mirabilite, another mineral, astrakanite, is obtained from the salt water of Kara-Bogaz-Gol. The chemical composition of this mineral is sodium magnesium sulfate. Astrakanite differs from mirabilite only in its crystalline structure and its physical properties. This mineral received its name because of its widespread occurrence in the lakes of Astrakhan Oblast. Mirabilite, transformed into sodium sulfate, is a valuable raw material for the production of soda, metallic sodium sodium silicate, and a number of other chemical products. The chief consumer of sulfate is the glass industry.(1)

Most of the salt used for food in the USSR is obtained from salt lakes. (3) One of the largest of these is Lake Baskunchak in Astrakhan Oblast. The saltmining season on this lake began on 8 April. Salt pumps are used for extracting the salt.(4) Four large machines for breaking up the hard salt layers are in operation. Railroad tracks have been built to the salt-mining area. The salt is immediately loaded into railroad cars and shipped to the port of Vladimirovka on the Volga River. The first few thousand tons of salt have been extracted in 10 days during April and are being loaded on river barges.(5)

In Artemovsk, Ukrainian SSR, salt is mined from an underground mine. Salt deposits are found here at depths of 80, 100, 200, or more meters. As in coal mines, great changes have taken place in salt mining in recent years. Cutting rachines are used for cutting drifts. The salt is loaded by S-153 machines and scrapers. Electric locomotives run underground and deliver the salt to elevator cars. Artemovsk salt is shipped to every part of the USSR.(3)

The Solotvino salt mines in the Transcarpathian Oblast have existed for over 100 years. However, only under Soviet rule were the mines equipped with modern machinery to become important enterprises. Solotvino salt miners have already exceeded the Five-Year Plan.(6)

The Sol'-Iletsk Salt Mine, Chkalov Oblast, is one of the largest salt-mining enterprises in the country. The salt from this mine is of high quality and has a high chlorine content. Salt mining has been completely mechanized.(7)

The Chon-Tuz Salt Mine of the "Cholpon" Industrial Artel, Kirgiz SSR, fulfilled the 1949 plan by 7 November. Improved techniques and labor mechanization made it possible to increase labor productivity 62 percent over 1948.(8)

SOURCES

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- 2. Pionerskaya Pravda, No 33, 25 Apr 50
- 3. Komsomol'skaya Pravda, No 93, 19 Apr 50
- 4. Izvestiya, No 85, 9 Apr 50
- 5. Pravda, No 108, 18 Apr 50
- 6. Pravda Ukrainy, No 271, 18 Nov 49
- 7. Krasnaya Zvezda, No 260, 3 Nov 49
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